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ABSTRACT

The first five sections of this document deal with aspects of an evaluation program over which administrators have considerable, if not a primary, influence. These include (1) Climate: developing a climate among staff and constituents that is supportive of evaluation; (2) Focus: providing leadership in focusing the evaluation by assisting in determining what meaning evaluation is to have in the district and the purposes it is to serve, and providing direction and input into the design of evaluations to ensure that they meet the needs of the district; (3) Organization: providing an organization and support for evaluation within the district by establishing an organizational structure for evaluation, establishing policies and procedures for the conduct of evaluation, and providing the needed staff, materials, equipment, facilities, and budget necessary to carry out planned evaluation activities; (4) Communication: providing and maintaining open channels of communication among the administration, school district staff, local board of education, and public for the release of evaluation results and gathering of feedback concerning the results; and (5) Utilization: providing the leadership and mechanisms for the utilization of evaluation results. The sixth section provides a discussion of the role of the evaluator and the relationship of his or her role to that of the administrator. The final section discusses some of the implications for administrators and school districts of evaluations and/or evaluation programs conducted in a district. (Author/RC)

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Administrator's
Guide
to

Final

EVALUATION
IN
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

IM005 992

DIVISION OF PLANNING
DIVISION OF RESEARCH
N.C. DEPT. OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
RALEIGH, N.C. 27611

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AN ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO EVALUATION IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

by

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Prepared for the
North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina
December, 1975

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PREFACE

During the 1974-75 school year an ESEA Title V, Part C project was conducted in North Carolina to investigate the area of evaluation in local school districts and to develop, on the basis of this investigation, designs for evaluation systems for four of the State's local education agencies. During the year, surveys of evaluation activities in school districts across the country were conducted. Visits were made to 13 of these districts to discuss in depth their evaluation programs. Training sessions were held to acquaint the participants with current evaluation theory and practice.

All of the participants in the project were central office staff members of their respective districts. As the project progressed we all discovered that there was little in the way of literature or example that would assist administrators in making decisions regarding the kinds of evaluation activities that could and should be conducted in their districts. There appeared to be a need to pull together the information that was available and the information that we had gathered during the year for other administrators who were making decisions concerning the type of evaluation activities that would be conducted in their districts.

This document is an attempt to provide this kind of information to school district administrators. The document does not, nor does it claim to present details or "how-tos" for specific evaluation situations. These details are more appropriate for evaluators and are addressed in much of the available evaluation literature. The content, instead, focuses on those factors about which administrators must make decisions in order to develop an effective evaluation program for their district.

The author is particularly indebted to the representatives of the Cleveland, Pender, Wake and Wilkes County School Districts who participated in the project and influenced the content of this document through their questions and suggestions for evaluation in their district. The author is also indebted to Dr. William J. Brown, Director of the Division of Research and Dr. Roger Schurrer, Director of the Division of Planning and their staffs for their support in the preparation of this document. A particular note of appreciation is given to Ms. Rebecca Manley who reviewed portions of the document and offered many valuable suggestions. Typing the many drafts of this document was masterfully and cheerfully done by Mrs. Pam Lemaster.

Tanya M. Kniefel

Raleigh, North Carolina
December 1, 1975

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INTRODUCTION

The time when administrators could choose whether or not they would evaluate their school programs is probably behind us. Evaluation requirements accompanying federal and now many state funds, state legislated or policy-based accountability programs and most modern approaches to school district administration neccessitate the collection of evaluative information concerning many aspects of a district's programs and operation. Administrators are not, therefore, addressing the question "Will I evaluate?" but "What should I evaluate?, How do I establish a mechanism within the district to do evaluation?, What are my responsibilities for the evaluations conducted in the district?"

It is the purpose of this document to provide information about evaluation which would assist administrators in responding to these types of questions for their district. It is addressed to administrators rather than evaluators for several reasons. First, as with other of the district's programs, administrators have the ultimate responsibility for the quality and appropriateness of the evaluations that are conducted by or for the district. Secondly, administrators, through their individual personalities, leadership and responsibilities have a marked effect on many of the more technical aspects of evaluation. Stufflebeam (1974) and Sanders and Guba (1973), for example, suggest that: (1) audience to whom evaluation is to be addressed; (2) the sociopolitical environment; (3) moral, contractual and legal requirements and considerations; and (4) organizational and administrative structures, all elements

of school district administration, have a significant effect on such technical aspects of evaluation as: (1) the *definition* of evaluation employed; (2) the timing and means of *initial entry* into the evaluation process; (3) the *criteria* that are brought to bear on the evaluation; (4) the *variables* that are selected for study; (5) the *design* that is developed; (6) the *techniques* that may be used; (7) the *sources of information* that may be tapped; and (8) the *reports* that are issued. Finally, most of the literature concerning evaluation is addressed to the more technical concerns of evaluators rather than to thoseof administrators. Little has been written that addresses more directly the concerns of administrators who are assuming the responsibility of managing and directing evaluation efforts in their school districts.

The first five sections of the document deal with aspects of an evaluation program over which administrators have considerable, if not a primary, influence. These include:[1]

I. CLIMATE: Developing a climate among staff and constituents that is supportive of evaluation

II. FOCUS: Provicing leadership in focusing the evaluation

A. Assisting in determining the meaning evaluation is to have in the district and the purpose(s) it is to serve

B. Providing direction and input into the design of evaluations to ensure that they meet the needs of the district

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[1]Some of the responsibilities given in this list were taken from Thomas R. Owens, "Suggested Tasks and Roles of Evaluation Specialists in Education," Educational Technology, XIII (1968), pp. 4-10, and Edward L. Morphet, Roe L. Johns and Theordore L. Reller, Educational Organization and Administration (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1967), pp. 531-555.

III. ORGANIZATION: Providing an organization and support for evaluation within the district

A. Establishing an organizational structure for evaluation

B. Establishing policies and procedures for the conduct of evaluation

C. Providing the needed staff, materials, equipment, facilities and budget necessary to carry out planned evaluation activities

IV. COMMUNICATION: Providing and maintaining open channels of communication among the administration, school district staff, local board of education and public for the release of evaluation results and gathering of feedback concerning the results

V. UTILIZATION: Providing the leadership and mechanisms for the utilization of evaluation results

The sixth section provides a discussion of the role of the evaluator and the relationship of his or her role to that of the administrator. The final section of the document discusses some of the implications for administrators and school districts of evaluations and/or evaluation programs conducted in a district.

It is hoped that after reading the document administrators will have a better understanding of the evaluation process as it applies to local school districts. It is also hoped that they will be more aware of the alternatives available to them and the implications of these alternatives for their particular school district.

I. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A CLIMATE SUPPORTIVE OF EVALUATION

Administrators are perhaps in the single most important position to influence the attitude and climate toward evaluation in their district. Dr. Jack Taylor, Superintendent of the Saginaw Public Schools, views the importance of this role in the following way:

> My relationship to the evaluation department is one of mutual dependence. I rely on them to provide the kind of information necessary to make rational decisions and they rely on me, as superintendent, to create a climate of acceptance for evaluation procedures among the professional staff and especially among the administrative decision-makers. (Taylor, 1975, p. 11)

An administrator influences the staff's attitude: (1) by his or her action or inaction in exerting leadership in evaluation activities; (2) by communicating the degree of importance which he or she attaches to evaluation in the district; and (3) by the manner, i.e. punative or constructive, in which results are used. To establish and maintain a climate supportive of evaluation in the district the administrator needs to communicate to the staff the importance he or she places on evaluation and to clarify the manner in which results will be used.

While each administrator knows the best way to obtain the cooperation and support of his or her staff, it may be of some benefit to identify some activities which may lead to a climate supportive of evaluation.[2]

1. *Determining the potential recipients' and/or target groups' existing attitude toward evaluation and concentrating efforts to improve the attitudes of those who are most negative.*

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[2]Again, some of these activities were adapted from the Owen's article, p. 5.

Strategies as formal as the administration of instruments designed to measure attitudes toward evaluation or as informal as casual conversations between administrators and their staff can be utilized to determine attitudes toward evaluation. Based on the results of these surveys administrators can plan more specific activities such as those that are described in the remainder of this discussion to gain support for evaluation in the district.

2. *Setting an example of support by acting positively upon the receipt of both positive and negative results.*

The example that administrators set when they receive evaluation results has a great influence on the way in which the staff receives and uses results. Administrators who view favorable results as a reflection of the quality of the staff and the district's programs and view unfavorable results as valuable information upon which to base improvements can favorably influence the staff's receipt and use of both favorable and unfavorable results.

3. *Establishing evaluation as an integral part of school district operation for administrative and instructional decision-making and reporting school achievement to the public.*

When evaluation is utilized regularly, the fear of evaluation produced by unfamiliarity and uncertainty can be lessened considerably. Administrators can best achieve this acceptance by establishing a continuous program of evaluation that pervades all levels of school district operation.

4. *Stating clearly the purposes for evaluation and the role of each staff member in conducting and using the results.*

In addition to creating familiarity through experience, an administrator can decrease the uncertainty associated with evaluation by creating a common understanding among his or her staff of the meaning and purpose

of evaluation and the role each staff member is to perform. One way of achieving this goal which is highly recommended is the establishment of district wide policies and procedures for evaluation which can then be communicated to each staff member.

5. *Securing the participation of staff in planning, implementation and use of evaluation.*

Greater support for evaluation among the staff can be obtained if they are not solely the victims of evaluation efforts but are also actively involved in decisions regarding the evaluation to be conducted. Staff participation can be helpful to administrators and evaluators alike in determining evaluation needs, designing evaluations to meet these specific needs and providing suggestions and assistance in the use of results.

6. *Maintaining open channels of communication between the administration, evaluators, staff and public.*

The fulfillment of this major responsibility can do much to ease the minds of those persons directly affected by evaluation. As we as a nation have so recently discovered, suppression of information and isolation of leaders in regard to any given program can lead to paranoia, fear, distrust and a variety of other undesirable situations and environments. Administrators who establish an open communication policy regarding evaluation and take steps to accurately portray the results that are obtained can do much to reduce the incorrect rumors and suspicions that so often accompany the innocent or overt suppression of information from constituents.

7. *Providing administrative support and assistance to staff whose projects or performance are being evaluated.*

In order to develop support for evaluation, staff members need to know that they do not become "untouchable" or outcasts when their projects and/or performances are being evaluated. If the purpose of the evaluation is improvement, this fact should be clearly communicated to the staff and

the necessary support services to enhance improvement should be made immediately and continuously available. In cases where evaluation is to be utilized to make decisions regarding continuation or termination of projects or employment, this situation should be most clearly communicated and thoroughly explained to the staff.

8. *Focusing evaluations as the information needs of the district staff and/or constituents.*

Perhaps the greatest support for evaluation can be obtained if staff members and constituents are provided information which they perceive to be of immediate value, applicability, and interest. This requires that administrators be cognizant and sensitive to the needs of their staff and public and provide evaluation services that will meet these needs.

9. *Providing staff in-service in evaluation.*

The capability and willingness of staff members to participate in planning and utilizing results of evaluations should be increased as they learn more about the process of evaluation. In-service training in the evaluation process, e.g. identifying evaluation needs, planning evaluations, selecting, developing, and administering evaluation instruments, analyzing results and developing reports describing evaluations, should give the staff sufficient skills to actively participate in planning and conducting evaluation activities. In-service training sessions accompanying the release of evaluation results should not only describe the results but also contain suggestions that staff members could follow to use the evaluation results in their work.

In summary, the climate or attitude toward evaluation has a great deal of influence on the way and extent in which evaluation results are used in a school district. Administrators wishing to maximize the use of evaluation results need to be aware of staff and constituent attitudes

toward evaluation and take actions to improve or maintain a supportive climate in which to conduct evaluation activities.

II. FOCUSING THE EVALUATION TO MEET SPECIFIED NEEDS

The potential usefulness of evaluation is determined, to a large degree, by the adequacy with which it addresses the needs of the individuals or institutions who will receive the results. One of the first evaluation tasks is, therefore, one of determining what the needs for evaluation are and then selecting the kinds of evaluative information that will meet those needs. Administrators of school districts are usually in the position of knowing the most about the district's overall needs. It is, therefore, important that they participate in the decisions that lead to a narrowing or focusing of evaluation efforts.

From an administrative viewpoint, some of the more important categories of alternatives which provide a focus to evaluation are: (1) the meaning and purpose given to evaluation; (2) the specific audiences that the evaluation will serve or address; and (3) the information that the evaluation will provide. It is important to reiterate that these are categories of *alternatives*. There are, in other words, no immediately correct sets of variables or designs for evaluation. Each alternative gives evaluation a rather specific focus and should be weighed in light of the particular needs of the district.

Determining the Meaning and Purpose of Evaluation

One of the first steps in focusing an evaluation is to establish a clear position regarding the meaning and purpose evaluation is to have. Because educational evaluation evolved from a variety of conceptual bases and has been utilized for many purposes, it is quite common to find

many definitions and uses for evaluation in the literature and in practice.[3] Each of these approaches has some definite and often different implications for the manner in which evaluations will be designed, conducted and used. It, therefore, becomes important that administrators seeking to meet certain needs know what they can expect to obtain from the approach they select.

What is Evaluation?

> Appraisals are inevitable. Citizens, parents, students, teachers, administrators, board of education members, and representatives of the state department of education have views (judgments) regarding the strengths and limitations of given schools or school systems.. The question that confronts the educational administrator, therefore, is not whether or not there will be appraisals. It is, rather, whether or not the appraisals will be reasonably valid or only judgments made on the basis of inadequate data, or even with merely rumor as the "foundation."
>
> (Morphet, Johns and Reller, 1967, p. 533)

Evaluation, as perceived for the purposes of this paper, is not a determination of worth which is based solely on personal perceptions and opinions, but a disciplined process of inquiry designed to obtain accurate information about its objects. Evaluation of a school district's reading program, for example, would not be considered adequate or complete if taken from statements in a newspaper editorial, remarks of a vocal citizens' group or even opinions of the district's administration. While each of these "evaluations" may in reality be correct, the type of evaluation which is to be discussed here is a more systematic and scientific process which should lead groups having divergent opinions to similar conclusions if the process were repeated.

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[3]Steele (1973), for example has categorized over 160 approaches to evaluation into six major and different conceptual areas.

EXAMPLE I

In a recent telephone survey of State Education Agencies the question was asked, "Would you identify some school districts in your state which are conducting exemplary evaluation programs?" Examples of the responses given are listed below:

1. "All the districts in our state conduct evaluation programs. Each has an extensive program of group and diagnostic testing."

{*Evaluation means testing*}

2. "There are no districts in our state that have an evaluation program."

{*Here it is difficult to determine what evaluation meant to the respondent because the current state education directory listed four school districts that had directors and/or departments of evaluation.*}

3. "We are just beginning to write objectives in many of our school districts. We hope to begin implementing evaluations of these objectives next year."

{*Evaluation means determining the achievement of objectives.*}

And the most common response:

4. "What do you mean by 'exemplary evaluation programs'?"

{*Evaluation means???*}

In spite of this apparent confusion, there are three definitions of evaluation that currently seem to be receiving the most widespread recognition and use. They are: (1) evaluation is the process of determining the achievement of objectives; (2) evaluation is the process of providing information for decision-making; and (3) evaluation is the process of determining the worth or merit of a program, activity, etc.

The definition which has probably received the greatest acceptance and use among educators in local school districts is one in which evaluation is defined as the process of *comparing performance with behaviorally stated objectives*. This approach to evaluation was

developed in the 1930's by Ralph W. Tyler (1942) and his associates as they conducted the well-known Eight-Year Study. While variations on this definition have been developed over the years, the basic procedure for conducting evaluation when this definition is used is to: (1) develop a set of behaviorally stated objectives; (2) select or develop measures to determine the achievement of the objectives; (3) gather data on the specified behaviors; and (4) compare the results to the pre-specified criteria set in the objective. A program is then judged on the basis of the achievement of its objectives. For many evaluations of this type, the objectives reflect desired student outcome behaviors which are viewed by many as the ultimate criteria for programmatic success.

There are several advantages to this approach to evaluation. First, basing evaluations upon pre-specified objectives provides an immediate focus and thus simplifies the process of evaluation design. Some objectives are even written so that complete specification of the evaluation to be done is included in the objective itself. Secondly, because the criteria for success is stated in the objective, it is easy to determine if the objective has been achieved. It is simply a matter of comparing the evaluation results to the stated criteria. Finally, objective based evaluations focus on outcomes, usually related to students, which are very important concerns for school districts and their constituents.

There are, however, some limitations to the use of this definition at a school district level that should be noted. As mentioned previously, most objectives are written in terms of student outcome behaviors. Evaluations based on these outcomes provide some very important information related to student status and progress. They do not, however, provide information on the aspects of the program such as teaching method, content, cost, supporting

services, etc. which an administrator must manage in order to correct deficiencies in student outcome behaviors or other related student variables such as socio-economic status, home environment, etc. which may have considerable effect on student outcome behaviors. These evaluations, in other words, point to the illness but do not suggest causes or cures.

A second problem is that the development of objectives often breaks the program into parts, e.g. achievement and attitude, which are then evaluated separately. This fractionalization makes it difficult to view the program as a whole or to determine the relationship between the behaviors measure.

Finally, the basis for conducting this type of evaluation is the existence and quality of a set of objectives. Programs for which no objectives are developed or are readily discernible are difficult,if not impossible to evaluate using the steps listed earlier. In addition, because the objectives themselves are seldom evaluated, the quality of the evaluation must most often rely on the quality of the objectives that have been developed. Programs with weak or inappropriate objectives will most often produce weak or inappropriate evaluations.

A second popular definition of evaluation is *providing information for decision-making*. Administrators adhering to this type of definition would be especially sensitive to the decisions that would need to be made about a program and see to it that information related to the decision is made available through the evaluation. This definition has been particularly beneficial in focusing the use of evaluation to the educational and administrative questions that are daily faced in schools. It also has the advantage of expanding the kinds of evaluative information that

can be provided to include information about aspects of a program such as needs, goals and objectives, procedures and activities as well as outcomes. Finally, this type of evaluation has the advantage of providing information at any time in a program's operation that a decision is needed rather than only at the end of a program when outcomes are determined.

The major limitation of this type of evaluation is the difficulty of identifying and specifying educational decisions and decision-makers. Without this information it becomes difficult to design appropriate evaluations to meet decision making needs. A second limitation occurs when attempting to distinguish between the kinds of information that are needed for decision making. The meaning which evaluation is to have becomes somewhat confused when information which is not clearly evaluative is provided for decision making purposes. Finally, providing information for many of the educational decisions that need to be made can be an extremely complex and costly process, decreasing its capability of being implemented in many school districts. Because of these and other difficulties associated with the use of this definition, some evaluators, e.g. Scriven (1967) and Stufflebeam (1975), are perceiving it as a purpose or use for evaluation rather than a statement of meaning.

A third definition which is gaining increasingly wider acceptance is the one provided us by the dictionary. In this definition, evaluation is the process of *determining the worth or merit of a thing*. Clearly, this is the simplest of the definitions given here and the least specific in terms of providing indicators of how the evaluation is to be done. It does, however, have the widest acceptance and understanding by educators and the lay public alike and appears to make up in meaning for what it lacks in specificity. The use of this definition requires that information be

gathered, analyzed, and interpreted so that a determination of the merit of the program or any of its aspects being studied can be made. Because it is not specifically tied to student outcomes or instructional decisions, all areas of the school program can be considered when an evaluation design is being developed. The selection of an evaluation design or technique, when this definition is accepted, becomes more closely aligned to the purpose for which the evaluation is being conducted and the specific questions that it is to address.

The major limitation of this definition for administrators is its lack of specificity for designing and conducting evaluations. Persons using this definition for evaluation must use their knowledge of the many techniques of disciplined inquiry in order to develop an evaluation design that will provide information that can be used to determine the worth or merit of the object of the evaluation. A second limitation is the difficulty of determining the criteria or values that will be used to determine worth or merit.

Unfortunately, none of these definitions has become universally accepted and all are being heavily utilized. It is, therefore, important that administrators become acquainted with existing conceptualizations so that they can (1) overtly select a definition which best fits the evaluation needs of their district; (2) best use the results of mandated evaluations which may be based on a differing conceptualization than the one used in the district; and (3) provide a common basis for communication concerning evaluation among their staff and constituents.

What Is The Purpose Of Evaluation?

While there are many purposes for which evaluations can be conducted in a school district, it appears that they all cluster into two main categories: (1) providing information which is relevant and useful to the

decisions that are made in the district; and (2) providing information on school district accomplishments for distribution to various funding and/or governing agencies and publics.

The major characteristic of evaluations that are conducted to provide information for decision-making is their responsiveness to evaluation needs *within* the district. They are designed primarily to provide information to use in the administration of schools and the improvement of educational programs. They can be designed, for example, to:

1. determine the effectiveness of instructional programs; staff, methods, etc.;
2. identify operational needs;
3. provide a basis for the allocation of funds to programs and/or operational areas;
4. identify strengths and weaknesses in a given program area;
5. determine the worth of alternative approaches; and
6. monitor ongoing programs.

When the evaluations are completed they are fed back to the staff personnel in the district who are responsible for the area being evaluated. Evaluation, for this purpose, is most often conducted and used internally by the district.

Evaluations which are intended to provide information about school accomplishments to an external audience are characterized by a more outcome-oriented approach and, in many cases, adherence to the design and reporting regulations of the agency to whom the report is sent. These evaluations are used primarily as a school public relations and participation tool between the district and its community and as an accountability mechanism for the constituents and agencies which have granted funds or services to the district. They can be used, for example, to:

1. provide information on school achievements and/or needs to local decision-making bodies;

2. provide information on school achievements and/or needs to the public;

3. meet state and federally supported program requirements;

4. comply with legislated accountability requirements;

5. comply with state accreditation requirements; and

6. comply with regional accreditation requirements.

Evaluations conducted for this purpose have a more external use with the results most often being transmitted to groups or agencies outside of the immediate school district staff.

EXAMPLE 2

> In the Dallas, Texas school district, specific provisions through board-approved policy have been developed to ensure the appropriate use of evaluation for both decision-making and accountability. *Process evaluations*, as they are called, are conducted by the district's evaluators to determine specific strengths and weaknesses in program operation. These results are, by policy, relayed only to the program staff members who have the responsibility for implementing and directing the program. Based on the results, the program staff can alter or modify aspects of the program that are not effective and capitalize on its strengths. *Product evaluations* are conducted to determine the overall accomplishments of the program and are, by policy, reported to the administration and local board of education. In this way evaluations are tailored to the needs and responsibilities of both the program staff and district-wide decision-makers. (Webster, 1975)

When the information needs of external agencies and the public overlap with those of the school district staff, evaluations can be designed

to serve both the purposes of decision-making and reporting to external audiences. When the information needs differ, however, choices need to be made concerning the purpose of the evaluation so that appropriate questions can be studied and reporting mechanisms developed. A quick check of the purpose for which an evaluation is to be conducted can be made by comparing the district's purposes and the characteristics of its use to the chart in Figure I.

Figure 1. A Comparison of the Two Major Purposes for Evaluation in Local School Districts

Purpose	Provide information for administrative and instructional decision-making in the district	Provide information on accomplishments to funding/governing agencies and the public
Goal	Improved instruction More efficient district operation	Improved school/community relations School district accountability to funding/governing agencies and public
Focus of the Evaluation	Aspects of school district operation which need to be improved or strengthened	Total school district and/or individual program accomplishments
Primary Audience for the results	School district staff	External funding/governing agencies Public
Major criteria for judging the evaluations	Relevance to school district's needs Timely provision of information Responsiveness to district evaluation needs	Objectivity and Credibility of results

Identifying The Audiences For Evaluation Information

Closely related to determining the purpose for evaluation is the identification of the audiences who will receive and use the resulting information. This is because one of the key characteristics of effective evaluation is its utility or capability to be used. In order to be of use, evaluations must be focused to a large extent on the needs of their audiences.

The extent to which the results of an evaluation are perceived to be useful to any group is largely determined by the degree to which the results address areas of interest and usefulness to them. For an instructional program area, for example, teachers may wish to know which materials and approaches are most effective for students of various abilities. Principals may wish to know which organizational patterns, i.e. team teaching, open space, traditional, etc., are most effective. Supervisors may wish to identify areas of needed teacher in-service. The administrative staff may wish to know the overall accomplishments in the area and be provided information that would assist them in allocating personnel, materials, facilities and monies to the program. The board of education and public may wish to know what students are achieving in the selected program area.

It is for this reason that administrators and evaluators need to identify the major audiences that each evaluation will address. Provisions can then be made to ensure that the design of the evaluation includes questions addressed to the types of information that its audiences will use.

EXAMPLE 3

Some of the audiences to which a school district might direct its evaluation results include:

DIRECT PARTICIPANTS

Local Board of Education
Superintendent
Administrative Staff
Instructional Supervisors
Principals
Department or Grade Level Chairpersons
Teachers
Instructional Support Staff
Noninstructional Support Staff
Students

INDIRECT PARTICIPANTS--CLOSE ASSOCIATION

Parents
Ancillary Booster Groups
Local Education Organizations
- Teacher Organization
- Phi Delta Kappa
- Special Interest Parent Groups

Education Committees of Larger Organizations
- Service Clubs (Lions, Women's Club, etc.)
- League of Women Voters

State Education Agency
Federal Agencies
Foundations

INDIRECT PARTICIPANTS--DISTANT ASSOCIATION

Political Leaders
Business and Industry Leaders
Community Agencies and Organizations
Professional People
"Blue Collar" Working Class
Disadvantaged People
Non-Parent Adults
Older Citizens
Nearby Colleges and Universities
Educational Researchers
Media

{From Kean (1975), Woods (undated), and Bettinghaus and Miller (1973)}

Identifying the audiences to whom evaluation results should be addressed determines who will be the target of the results but does not specify what information they need. To determine the information that should be transmitted to identified audiences requires an awareness of their interests in educational information, their knowledge of potential areas to be included in the communication and their attitude toward the schools and the particular program being evaluated.

Administrators know as a result of their experience that the various groups associated with their schools have differing interests in the school program. Some groups are most interested in the instructional program, some the achievements of pupils, others the costs for education, etc. If the major interests of targeted audiences can be identified, evaluations can be focused more appropriately to their particular interests and needs.

EXAMPLE 4

McClosky (1967, pp. 244-245),for example, provides a chart of typical publics, size and communication function and major interests in schooling which may be a helpful starting point for district personnel who are trying to identify the interests of targeted audiences. Information such as the following is provided:

Public

Parents

Size and Communication Functions

Large, exceptionally interested group--includes some social leaders--constantly communicates widely through person-to-person and person-to-group channels.

Major Interests in Schooling

Children's educational needs and accomplishments, school's contributions to children's well-being, happiness, and social status--personal satisfactions derived from children's academic achievements and participation in school activities.

As administrators identify the audience for evaluation they will, undoubtedly, on many occasions find that there are several audiences which would benefit from the results. To the extent that it is possible, evaluations should be designed to meet these different needs. When the extent of the evaluation effort becomes prohibitive or the needs of the various audiences conflict, administrators should then place these audiences in some priority order so that the needs of the most important or crucial audiences can be met.

What Information Should The Evaluation Provide?

The areas of an educational system that can be evaluated are limited only by the techniques and skills which we currently possess to evaluate them and the imagination of those responsible for selecting areas of the school program to be evaluated. All aspects of school district operation in effect are, therefore, available for initial consideration as an object of evaluation. The difficult tasks are those of: (1) selecting those areas of the school district program where the need for evaluative information is the greatest; and (2) determining the types of information that are needed about the areas that have been selected.

Selecting the Areas of the School Program to be Evaluated

Before selecting areas of the program to evaluate, administrators should, from some framework, consider all of the areas of the district that might benefit from evaluative information. There are many ways to view the facets of a school district that can be evaluated. One helpful delineation is provided in the partial list of appropriate evaluation objects given by Stufflebeam (1975, p. 8);

Programs	- ongoing, goal directed activities, involving especially curricular offerings
Projects	- time-bounded, goal-directed activities such as federally funded experiments
Personnel	- teachers, administrators, coaches, counselors, custodians, etc.
Students	- persons enrolled in instructional offerings
Facilities	- buildings, equipment
Materials	- books, films, tapes, etc.
Ideas	- theories, plans, and designs
Institutions	- colleges, school systems, community service agencies, foundations, etc.
Evaluations	- evalution studies themselves should be evaluated

Using this breakdown it is possible to envision the evaluation of: (1) regular, on-going programs in a school district such as the reading, physical education and cultural arts programs; (2) special local and externally funded programs such as experimental approaches to classroom organization e.g. open classrooms, team-teaching, individualization of instruction, and ESEA Title I and Title III programs; (3) teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, supportive staff; (4) student progress in cognitive, affective and psychomotor areas; (5) the adequacy of buildings and equipment for programs which have specific facility needs, e.g. vocational education, environmental education, science, physical education, etc; and so on.

Another useful way to categorize the kinds of evaluation that might be conducted is according to the major areas that comprise school district operation, e.g. administration, curriculum and instruction, personnel, finance and business management, and physical facilities.

EXAMPLE 5

The Philadelphia public school system describes its evaluation focus around some of the major areas of school district responsibility.

1. Administrative and Survey Research Services: provides a pupil data system, socioeconomic and demographic analyses about the school and community populations, followup studies of graduates and dropouts, and maintains a management information center for administration.

2. Instructional Research and Development Services: assists in the development of proposals and tests and maintains a data management unit of instructional information.

3. Testing Services: has the responsibility for the development, implementation, and administration of all phases of the district's group testing program, provides staff in-service related to testing.

4. Priority Operations Evaluation Services: provides research assistance in the priority areas of the district superintendents and evaluates programs in the five priority areas of the district.

5. Federal Evaluation Resource Services: conducts evaluations of public and non-public school federally funded categorical projects.

(Kean, 1975)

A third way in which to view the kinds of programs that can be evaluated is according to the types of evaluations that are conducted, e.g. surveys, program evaluation, testing or assessment, research, etc.

EXAMPLE 6

Saginaw, Michigan public schools categorizes its evaluation according to the types of services that are performed. Some examples of the areas included in their program are:

I. Program Evaluation

1. Evaluation of ESEA Title I programs
3. Evaluation of the adult basic education program
4. Evaluation of the migrant education program
5. Evaluation of the bi-lingual education program

II. Assessment Services

8. Provide coordination and supervision of the school district's assessment program
10. Develop and maintain the department's Instrument Bank

III. Research Services

11. Conduct a dropout study in each secondary school
12. Prepare a written report of the student attitude survey conducted in grades 8 and 11
15. Develop a mechanism for disseminating current research findings to the professional staff
17. Conduct a context evaluation (needs assessment) at the district and building level

(Taylor, 1975)

Utilizing these or other frameworks for reviewing the district's programs, administrators should quickly find that there are many more areas that could be evaluated than time, staff and other resources allow. The selection of areas which will ultimately be evaluated is most often then a matter of narrowing the choice of alternatives by determining the importance to the district of the resulting evaluation information.

There are a number of ways in which the importance of evaluation of given areas of the school program can be identified. Whether planning for the development of a comprehensive evaluation system in a district or for a single evaluation, a good place to begin is with the information which is required by legislative, funding and policy mandates and, therefore, must be collected. There is no decision to be made here, but the identification of this information provides a list which can be consulted when other information needs are identified. Reference to documentation of required evaluation information helps planners prevent the duplication of data gathering activities and helps them judge the amount of further evaluation activity they can afford to conduct.

It is a little more time consuming to select the remaining areas of the school program that need to be evaluated. Several sources can provide inputs into this decision.

One source for determining the area to be evaluated is the opinions of the staff and constituency of the school district. Surveys asking persons to list their preferences for evaluation or prioritize a list of evaluation needs can be administered to the total school district staff, special subgroups of the staff, local board of education members, representatives of key community groups, the total community, parents and/or students. Results of such a survey can provide a list of evaluation needs in order of their preference.

Another source for identifying areas that need to be evaluated are those areas of the school program which can be identified as being particularly weak or strong. Particularly weak programs need to be evaluated so that problems associated with the program can be identified and corrective plans developed. Particularly strong programs need to be evaluated so that the reasons for success can be identified and, if possible, utilized in other programs. Programs that need intensive evaluation can be identified by reviewing test scores and other evaluation data, consulting with teachers and supervisors or by obtaining suggestions of the administrative staff.

A third source of information that can be used in identifying evaluation needs is the new and/or innovative programs designed to meet a special need for which there is little or no evaluative data. Because they are new to the system, evaluations can be designed to determine if the programs were correctly and fully implemented and if they are achieving the desired results.

Another source to consider when attempting to determine what will be evaluated is the specific interests of the local board of education members, parents, community groups, etc. Responsiveness to these needs can contribute to positive school-community relations and to support for the evaluation program in the community.

After the most important areas for evaluation have been identified, it may still be possible to have too many areas of concern to feasibly evaluate. In these instances administrators may need to seek ways to prioritize these areas or set up a multi-year program to evaluate each of the selected programs.

EXAMPLE 7

> The White Plains, New York school district determines what it will evaluate on a yearly basis. In the early spring requests for program/project evaluation are solicited from groups such as the building principals, the PTA council, advisory committees, teachers, students, parents and the administration. An Evaluation Priority Committee composed of the assistant superintendent for instruction, members of a district coordination team for curriculum and instruction, the superintendent's administrative assistant, the research/evaluation coordinator, the reading coordinator and the assistant director for pupil personnel services reviews the list and the district's required evaluations (federal programs, Board of Education goals, etc.) and develops a proposed list of evaluation priorities. In June, this list is presented to the Administrative/Supervisory staff of the district for discussion. On the basis of this input and the resources available in the district for evaluation, the Evaluation Priority Committee determines what will be evaluated during the upcoming school year.
>
> (Recommended Process for Identifying Evaluation Priorities, 1974)

Determining the Type of Evaluation Information that is Needed

Once areas to be evaluated have been selected, the specific types of information that need to be gathered should be determined. When, for example, it has been determined that the area of reading should be evaluated

administrators and evaluators need to decide if the evaluation design should contain provisions for gathering data related to student achievement, student ability, student attitudes, student interests, teacher preparation, adequacy of materials, adequacy of implementation of particular programs, etc.

At this point it might be contended that administrators who tread here would be assuming a role that rightfully belongs to the evaluator. In some cases, such as an external evaluation of a school district, this may be true. In other cases, however, when the district itself is seeking the evaluation, administrative input, or at least review of the types of information to be gathered, it is important to ensure that the evaluations meet the district's need.

There are several sources which may be considered to determine the types of evaluation information that might be collected:

1. the types of information identified in objectives related to the program;
2. the particular purpose for which the evaluation is being conducted;
3. the audiences who can be expected to be interested and/or use the results;
4. the opinions of experts and/or research in the area being evaluated;
5. the types of information specified in an adopted model for evaluation; and
6. the experience of others who have conducted similar evaluations.

Objectives for the program being evaluated, whether specifically developed by the district or drawn from curriculum guides, textbooks, policy manuals, etc. provide some information on the types of behaviors, e.g. achievement, attitude, etc. and activities that can be expected in

a given program. These are important first sources for persons designing evaluations to consult.

If the purpose for the evaluation is decision-making, there are questions such as the following that need to be answered. What kinds of decisions need to be made? Who will make the decisions? What types of information do they need? If the purpose, on the other hand, is to report the results to external audiences, what types of information do the recipients of the results need?

If audiences have been previously identified, it may be helpful to refer their particular interests and information needs as a source of information for determining the types of data to collect.

Experts in the area are always a good source of information to consult when trying to determine the types of information that are needed to evaluate a program. Subject area specialists are often found on the school district staff and can be consulted to determine the types of information needed. Other experts can be hired or consulted through their writings. The library is always a good place to begin a search for the types of information needed because it contains the opinions of experts, reviews of the literature on the topic and research studies which have been conducted to determine the important factors related to the topic being evaluated.

Some administrators may find it beneficial to adopt a specific model for evaluation which identifies some of the types of information that should be gathered. If, for example, an administrator were to choose to utilize the CIPP (Stufflebeam, et.al., 1971) model for evaluation, he or she would seek information related to the goals of the program, the particular design of the program, its implementation, and the results achieved.

If a model such as the one presented by Hammond (no date) were chosen, types of information gathered would be related to behavior (cognitive, affective, psychomotor), instruction (organization, content, method, facilities, cost), and institution (student, teacher, administrator, specialist, family, community). There are, of course, other models for evaluation that could be chosen, each having some implications for the type of information that should be collected.

A final source for determining the type of evaluation to be gathered is the experience of others who have conducted similar evaluations. Perhaps the largest source of information related to the experience of others is the ERIC collection which can be found in most major libraries and contains many evaluation reports conducted in school districts. A computer search of this collection is rather inexpensive and can provide abstracts of the evaluation reports concerning a given topic that are in the collection. Another source is either direct contact or the reports of personnel in other school districts who have conducted similar evaluations.

EXAMPLE 8

A study of evaluation designs in Portland, Oregon public schools revealed that the best designs asked for the following types of information.

1. Are the goals of the project being evaluated consistent with the program goals of the district and/or area in the subject area concerned (e.g. reading instruction)?

2. What are the relevant characteristics of the student population receiving instruction via the method or using the product in question?

3. To what extent is the program successful in achieving its goals?

4. Is the program economical to operate when comparisons are made with other programs having similar goals?

5. What special resources, personnel and facilities are required to successfully operate the program?

6. How does the efficacy of the project vary in relation to the characteristics of the schools in which it is operating?

7. How does the efficacy of the program vary in relation to the varying characteristics of the student population (e.g. sex, age, aptitude, ethnicity, socio-economic factors, etc.)?

8. How well is the project functioning in relation to the operational plan established for it?

(Hansen, 1975)

While it is probable that a great deal of assistance can be provided by an evaluator in determining the types of information that need to be collected, it is important that an administrator be cognizant of the types of information that he or she needs to have to obtain a useful evaluation of the selected program.

In summary, there are many factors to consider which affect the focus of evaluation in local school districts. It has been suggested that administrators who wish to ensure that the evaluations focus on their district's needsbe prepared to respond to the following types of questions:

1. What does the word "evaluation" mean as applied to this particular situation?

2. What is the purpose of this evaluation?

3. To what audiences will the results be reported? What are their particular information needs?

4. What specific areas of the school program are to be evaluated?

5. What types of evaluative information are needed to evaluate the program?

III. PROVIDING AN ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT FOR EVALUATION

One of the most important ways that the chief administrator of a school district can contribute to the effectiveness of the evaluations and influence the staff's attitude toward evaluation is to provide for adequate organization and support of evaluation. Failure to provide this support most often results in limited use of evaluation, an overburdening of staff who already have many other established demands on their time, conduct of evaluation by staff members with little or no training for the job, hastily designed and conducted evaluations, questionable results, and generally a bad taste in everyone's mouth concerning the value of evaluation to themselves and the school district's programs. In essence, if administrators do not provide the organization and support for evaluation, it is perhaps best to leave it undone.

The factors that should be considered by administrators who are reviewing their present evaluation organization or who are beginning to establish an evaluation capability in their district include: (1) the type of organization to establish; (2) the placement of the organization in the administrative structure of the district; (3) the policies and procedures guiding the conduct of evaluation; (4) staffing; and (5) resources such as materials, facilities and financial support.

Types of Organization for Evaluation in Local School Districts

There are several types of organizational structures that can be utilized for evaluation in a school district. The best type of organization

is the one which best meets the district's evaluation needs. Prior to the development of an organization for evaluation, administrators should obtain some preliminary information regarding the purpose they wish evaluation to serve, the extent of the evaluation services they wish to provide and any resources--personnel, materials, equipment, facilities, monies, etc.--that are currently available and can be obtained to support the evaluation effort. Then as they consider the types of organization that can be developed, they can use this information to develop the most appropriate organization for evaluation in their district.

Any organization plan that is established needs to provide the district with services such as evaluation design, instrument selection and development, data collection, analysis and interpretation and reporting of evaluation results. Stufflebeam (1973) suggests four such organizational strategies that may be appropriate to local school districts: (1) in-house evaluation departments; (2) self-evaluation; (3) contracting with external evaluation agencies; and (4) evaluation consortia between several school districts.

In-house Evaluation Departments

In this organizational strategy a position and/or department of evaluation is created within the district. This type of arrangement would be particularly beneficial to those districts who wish to utilize evaluation results for decision-making because of the proximity and constant availability of the evaluators to the rest of the school staff.

A second benefit of this type of organization is the inclusion of personnel among the district staff who have evaluation training and skills. Technical evaluation responsibilities can be assumed by these personnel relieving this burden from busy staff members who may not have adequate

training for the job. The possession of evaluation skills in one or more positions also avails the district of staff members who can readily train others to conduct and use evaluations.

A problem with this arrangement is that there are not enough trained evaluators to staff each school district in the country. In addition, for some districts, the development of an evaluation position or department of evaluation is too costly.

Another problem arises when the primary purpose for evaluation in the district is to report accomplishments to external audiences. The proximity of the evaluators may, in reality or in the minds of some audiences, decrease the objectivity and credibility of the evaluations. To combat this criticism, districts who have a position or department of evaluation may have to secure the services of external experts in evaluation to review the work of the district's evaluator(s) and give credence to the results they produce.

Self-Evaluation

A second organizational possibility is self-evaluation in which evaluation is conducted by persons in existing positions in the district. If the administrator is fortunate enough to have existing staff members who have sufficient skills in evaluation design, measurement, and data analysis and interpretation, most, if not all, of the evaluation tasks can be conducted by the school district staff with little or no outside help. If these skills are not available within the district, additional external assistance will need to be obtained.

Several kinds of assistance in this area can be provided to a district. Most common are the contractual services of individuals or agencies who can provide specialized evaluation services. Similar consultant services can usually be provided at no cost by the state education agency. A

second kind of assistance could be provided in tested materials which guide groups through particular kinds of evaluation activities. Unfortunately, packages of this type are not common and are generally difficult to locate.[4]

The importance of obtaining outside assistance when these skills are not available in the district cannot be overemphasized. The design and conduct of adequate and accurate evaluations requires knowledge of scientific inquiry, measurement, statistics and interpretation of results. The risks to the quality and usefulness of evaluations of failure to include this kind of expertise in the design of evaluations are far greater than the expense of obtaining this assistance.

EXAMPLE 9

> In a school district in the East the decision was made to establish a self-evaluation system in conjunction with the district's planning efforts. The superintendent and two or three of his key administrative staff members had rather sophisticated evaluation and research skills. The superintendent stated, "I feel that we have 80% of the technical knowledge and skills that we need to design and carry out evaluations in the district. For the remaining 20% we hire outside specialists and agencies who have materials, services and experience in the areas that we need assistance."

There are several benefits to a self-evaluation system. The major benefit is in the potential of incorporating evaluation as a responsibility and helpmate of all staff members. Initial costs to train the staff and to design ongoing evaluation procedures may be high, but when these activities are accomplished, this type of organization may be cheaper to maintain. Finally, a self-evaluation forces staff participation in decisions regarding evaluation and the conduct of the activities themselves.

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[4]One such package is a document on Curriculum Evaluation developed by Research for Better Schools. It is currently being revised and will be available in November, 1975.

The major problem associated with this organizational scheme has already been discussed--developing adequate plans and procedures for evaluation when staff members do not have the necessary training and skills. The concerned administrator can alleviate this problem by effectively utilizing external services and incorporating in this use in-service evaluation training for the staff. Secondly, a self evaluation system is more difficult to manage and control. Coordination of evaluation efforts, communication of results among staff and constituents and obtaining uniform, high quality evaluations are especially difficult. Finally, it is extremely difficult to control the biases of persons who are evaluating the programs they also direct. These biases decrease the objectivity and credibility of results that are obtained.

Contracting with External Evaluators or Evaluation Agencies

Local school districts may choose to contract with external agencies to provide the technical evaluation services that they need. This is a familiar model for school districts who utilize the services of test companies to provide instrumentation, score tests, analyze the results and provide reports of the results for a variety of levels within the district.

Evaluation specialists and agencies can provide most of the evaluation services that a school district requires. They can assist in the development of a comprehensive evaluation system for the district, provide technical services such as evaluation design, instrument development, data analysis and report development, and provide in-service training for the district staff.

There are several benefits to this type of arrangement. Teams of highly skilled and experienced evaluators that would otherwise be unavailable to the district can be utilized. If this is the case, administrators

can expect to receive carefully designed evaluations and accurate results. Through direct contracted services or by observation, staff members can obtain valuable in-service training. This kind of assistance, particularly if the individual or agency conducts the total evaluation and is known to produce high quality work, is usually highly credible to external agencies and the public.

The primary impediment to the use of external agencies is the often high cost of their services. Secondly, because they are external, these agencies may not have the opportunity to become as familiar with the district and its particular evaluation needs as is desirable. This same factor may also create some fear and resistance in staff members. Third, great care must be taken in selecting the agency or individual who is to provide the services. Unfortunately, some individuals and agencies promise more or better quality work than they deliver. A final limitation is that the district may come to depend solely on the external evaluators to assume the responsibility for evaluation and neglect its own responsibilities in this area.

Participating in a Consortium for Evaluation with Other School Districts

If administrators wish to utilize the services of trained evaluators and technicians on a continuous basis but are unable to establish the kinds of services they desire within their district, they may wish to join with other districts to form a consortium which would provide these services. Districts can pool their resources and establish policies to guide the provision of services such as conducting system-wide evaluations, technical services, consultant services in proposal development and special evaluation problems, and in-service training of staff.

EXAMPLE 10

> Perhaps the most well-known of the evaluation consortia was the EPIC Evaluation Center located in Tuscon, Arizona. The Center was initiated through an ESEA Title III project and was designed to provide evaluation assistance to fourteen school districts in the state. The Center had two major service areas: (1) the evaluation services division and (2) the field services division. The evaluation services area was designed to provide assistance to school districts through: (1) the development of evaluation designs; (2) test construction; (3) data processing; and (3) information storage and retrieval. The field services had the responsibility of initiating self-evaluation within the school districts by providing consultant services, providing information regarding innovative practices and providing in-service workshops. The Center was administered by its own director and staff under the direction of a board of directors which included the superintendents of the participating school districts and operated according to policies approved by this Board for its operation.
>
> (Hammond, no date)

The advantage of a consortium is that it provides needed evaluation services by skilled consultants who are in continual contact with the district at usually a lower cost. The limitations are that this service must be shared and the general difficulties of developing, implementing and maintaining services to districts with divergent interests and needs.

The type of organizational framework that a school district adopts for evaluation may not be as clearly defined as those that have been presented here. Administrators could conceivably utilize the benefits of each of these types of organizations simultaneously. The importance of reviewing these organizational types is to acquaint the reader with the strengths and weaknesses of each type so that decisions regarding the type of evaluation organization to be installed can reflect the most important needs of the district.

The Placement of Evaluation in the Organization

The place or position that evaluation occupies in school district operation can have an important effect on the credibility of results, pervasiveness of evaluation services, and degree to which evaluation needs are met. Credibility of evaluation results is most often perceived to be a result of the degree of objectivity with which a program is evaluated. Objectivity is quite often perceived to be a matter of distance. The closer the evaluator is to the program, the less likely the results will be completely objective. It is for this reason that it is suggested that evaluators be organizationally separated from the control and influence of program personnel. For some districts this is achieved by placing the evaluator or evaluators in a position separate from all programs and reporting directly to the superintendent. This same result is achieved in the situation where external consultants reporting directly to the administrator are used. In situations where this type of arrangement is not possible, credibility and objectivity can be enhanced by establishing a periodic review or evaluation of evaluation activities and services by a group external to the evaluation and program.

One of the most difficult to achieve aspects of an evaluation system is a pervasiveness of evaluation activities and services to all of the representative groups in the district who need and desire evaluation help. Because evaluation activities are often limited, it is common to find that results and services are somewhat isolated from the ongoing operations and problems of the district. This is particularly

true in districts where the primary purpose of evaluation is to meet external requirements or carry out routine, established data gathering activities. In order to provide evaluation services to all levels of district personnel, e.g. teachers, principals and central office staff, evaluators should be located organizationally so that they can have easy and immediate access to personnel at all levels and so that district personnel can have equally easy access to them.

If the purpose of evaluation in a district is to provide information for decision making, evaluators must be placed in a position that will allow them to be aware of the decision making and, therefore, evaluation needs of the district. This usually means that the evaluators need to be placed in a position close to key decision maker(s) in the district. The ability to provide needed and appropriate evaluations then becomes largely dependent upon the leadership capabilities and interests in evaluation of the administrator under which it is placed.

EXAMPLE 11

> Recently a prearranged call was made to a local school district superintendent in another state to discuss his evaluation program. His response to the question, "What kinds of evaluation activities are conducted in your district?" was "Well, actually, we don't do much evaluation here, but I guess you could talk to our Director of Research to find out what they are doing in that department." Conversations with the Director of Research revealed that the district had a Department of Research with 20 staff members that was conducting all of the district-wide testing and federal program evaluations. Most of the activities they conducted, however, were required by law, reported to the proper audiences and seldom used within the district. The Department and its Director appeared to be fairly well isolated from the administration of the district and were scheduled for cuts in staff and programs for the upcoming year.

In contrast, a visit was made to a district where the responsibility for evaluation was shared by two researchers under the supervision of one of the district's assistant superintendents who had, with the approval of the superintendent, established the small research and evaluation unit. They began their evaluation program by conducting studies that had immediate applicability to the district as a whole and sought early in their development to provide evaluative services to principals and teachers. Both representatives of the administration and principals in candid interviews discussed the way in which these studies had been of value to them and their plans for requesting similar services in the future.

As was the case in selecting the type of organization to install, the location of evaluation depends on the particular needs and climate of the district. Location is very important to the effectiveness of evaluation, however, because the placement of evaluation responsibilities can, in many cases, guarantee visibility and use or isolation and eventual abandonment of evaluation in the district.

Policies and Procedures

A great deal of misunderstanding and confusion can be avoided if the district has a set of policies and procedures for the evaluation activities that it conducts. These policies and procedures might include statements regarding the following:

1. The meaning and purpose of evaluation
2. The organization for evaluation including lines of authority and communication and the relationship of evaluation to other positions, departments and programs.
3. The roles of staff and outside consultants
4. Job descriptions of participants in evaluation

5. Procedural policies

   a. use of outside consultants
   b. evaluation design
   c. instrumentation
   d. analysis
   e. reporting audiences and formats

6. Ethical considerations

   a. use of human subjects
   b. release of individual results

7. Provisions of support

   a. released time for personnel
   b. materials
   c. facilities
   d. sources of financial support

EXAMPLE 12

In order to obtain some uniformity in the testing and evaluation activities of the three subdistricts in the decentralized Portland Public School system, policies were developed with respect to the city-wide testing program and cross-subdistrict program evaluations. Areas included in these policy statements included:

I. City-wide testing program

   a. types of tests and grades to be included
   b. setting standards of performances
   c. sampling
   d. maintaining and use of item bank

II. Cross-subdistrict program evaluations

   a. method of identifying common goals across subdistricts
   b. method of selecting instruments
   c. type of instrumentation
   d. type of cost measure
   e. type of score
   f. type of evaluation and balance (formative, summative)
   g. format of report

(Doherty, 1975)

Setting down these policies would not only provide a common basis for conducting evaluations within the system but would also provide some helpful guidelines for external evaluators who are not familiar with the district.

Staffing

The key to the quality of evaluation efforts is largely a function of the adequacy of the staff that designs and carries out the necessary activities. What, then are the skills that an administrator should seek in either internal or external evaluation staff members to ensure high quality evaluations?

Michael Scriven (no date), one of the country's foremost evaluators, says that evaluators need every skill known to man. Although we wish to think that he was being somewhat facetious, there are many evaluators who would be inclined to agree. Blaine Worthen (1975), another leading evaluator, chose to take a somewhat more narrow view when he defined 25 general research and evaluation tasks and related competencies. Although specific competencies were listed for most of these evaluation tasks, space does not permit their reproduction. From these tasks, however, the reader may be able to obtain a general idea of the skills that are needed to design and conduct evaluations.

1. Obtaining information about an area to be researched or a phenomenon to be evaluated.
2. Drawing implications from results of prior research and practice.
3. Conceptualizing the research problem or defining the object of evaluation.

4. Selecting an appropriate inquiry strategy for addressing the research or evaluation problem.

5. Formulating hypotheses or questions to be answered by the study.

6. Specifying data or evidence necessary for a rigorous test of the hypothesis or an unequivocal answer to the research or evaluation question.

7. Selecting appropriate research and evaluation designs to collect data to test the hypothesis or answer the question.

8. Identifying the population to which results should be generalized, and selecting a sample of the population.

9. Applying the research or evaluation design and recognizing or controlling threats to validity.

10. Identifying at appropriate levels of generality the goals of the program to be evaluated.

11. Assessing the value and feasibility of program goals.

12. Identifying standards or norms for judging worth of the phenonmenon to be evaluated.

13. Translating broad objectives into specific (measurable) objectives.

14. Identifying classes of variables for measurement.

15. Selecting or developing techniques of measurement.

16. Assessing the validity of measurement techniques.

17. Using appropriate methods to collect data (tests, interviews, unobtrusive measures, etc.)

18. Monitoring the program to detect deviations from design or specified procedures.

19. Choosing and employing appropriate techniques of design or specified procedures.

20. Using electronic computers and computer-related equipment.

21. Interpreting and drawing appropriate conclusions from data analysis.

22. Reporting research and evaluation findings and implications.

23. Making recommendations as a result of the evaluation.

24. Providing immediate feedback on program performance for use in decisions about program modification.

25. Obtaining and managing resources (material and human) necessary to conduct the research or evaluation study.

Lists such as these can be helpful to administrators as they seek to select a staff to conduct the evaluations for the district. They can be used as a guide to determine the evaluation skills that are already available to the district through its existing staff and simultaneously used to identify those skills that are yet needed.

Personnel possessing needed, necessary skills can be obtained in a variety of ways. They can be recruited and hired as members of the district staff. They can be hired on a more temporary basis as consultants. If the district is near a university, graduate students who have required internship experiences may be requested. Existing staff members who are interested in this area may be trained to conduct the necessary tasks. This is a particularly effective strategy for obtaining evaluation personnel who are

familiar with the district and are more inclined to remain. It is also an effective way of improving the overall evaluation capabilities of the district.

In addition to the technical skills required, an additional characteristic that is most desirable for evaluation staff members should also be considered--interface skills. In order for evaluation to be effectively utilized in the district there must be satisfying avenues through which communication between evaluators and other staff members can be transmitted. As Henry M. Brickel (1975) stated in reference to external evaluations, "(Evaluators must have) the ability to bite the hand that feeds you while seeming to be only licking it." Evaluators who cannot effectively translate the results of their studies to less technically oriented audiences or who lack the tolerance and patience to effectively communicate their results decrease drastically the utility of their findings.

An important aspect of staffing is the continuous staff development of both the evaluators and the other personnel who utilize the results. Educational evaluation is a relatively new field and, as a result, new techniques and conceptualizations are continually being introduced. To maintain a quality staff, administrators should encourage the development of continuous and multi-level staff development activities in evaluation.

Resources

As for any other program conducted in the district, resources such as time, personnel, materials, equipment, facilities, and dollars should be allocated to evaluation based on the type and scope of the activities that are to be conducted. While this may seem to be an obvious statement, it is common to find that adequate provisions for evalution are not found in

school district budgets and operational plans. Without adequate resources, evaluation activities cannot be expected to be effectively implemented.

How much of a district's budget should be devoted to evaluation? In industry figures from 10% to 25% are common. In education figures of 1% are extremely high and as extremely uncommon. The answer to this question, of course, depends on the activities that are to be conducted. Extensive evaluation efforts require large budgets and operational plans while modest efforts require less. The important thing for an administrator to consider is the provision of a budget that will get the necessary job done.

EXAMPLE 13

> In a recent study of evaluation units in large districts in Texas the largest percentage of the budget to be spent for evaluation was .8% in the Dallas School System. Actual dollar expenditures per pupil were $6.20, $2.06, $1.54, $1.48, $1.39, $.15 and $.12.
>
> (Jackowski, McNamara & Cole, 1975)

Summary

In this section attempts have been made to briefly discuss those aspects of organization which have the greatest impact on the evaluation activities conducted in a school district. Administrators who wish to analyze their present or proposed organization for evaluation might benefit from responding to these questions:

1. Is the organizational structure such that it meets the district's needs for evaluation?
2. Is the location of evaluation within the structure appropriate?
3. Are there established policies and procedures for evaluation?
4. Are the needed skills and abilities evident in the current staff? If not, have adequate plans been developed to secure these skills?
5. Are the allocated resources adequate to accomplish the needed tasks? If not, can additional resources be obtained? If not, have activities been reduced to reflect available resources?

IV. COMMUNICATING EVALUATION RESULTS

One of the most effective ways to achieve an acceptance of evaluation and encourage its use is to implement a carefully developed plan for communicating results to targeted audiences and obtaining their assistance through feedback. To date, however, this aspect of the evaluative process has been inadequately addressed, accounting, in some measure, for the limited utility of evaluation in school districts. Administrators interested in developing effective evaluation programs in their schools need to be aware of the basic considerations associated with effective communication and to install procedures into their operation which would guarantee an adequate program for communicating evaluation results to potential users.

In order to maximize the use of evaluation results, plans for the communication of findings should be made at the same time that the evaluations themselves are designed. When this is done the school district staff can be prepared to develop timely and appropriate reports and the recipients of the results can be prepared to receive the results.

In order to establish an effective system for communicating the results of evaluation administrators need to: (1) see that mechanisms for planning and conducting the communication program are established; (2) become familiar with the district's particular audiences for evaluation results; (3) see that accurate and appropriate reporting procedures are utilized; and (4) establish channels and procedures to provide feedback from various groups regarding the results and to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication system itself.

These are, of course, types of activities which characterize good public relations and communications programs in school districts. For those administrators that have such programs in their districts the following discussion will provide some suggestions for the inclusion of evaluative information in their existing communication program. For those administrators who do not have such established programs the following discussion is designed to acquaint them with both basic considerations for communicating information and specific suggestions related to the release of evaluative information.

Providing the Framework for the Development of a Program for the Release of Evaluation Results

Prior to specific planning for the release of any evaluation results, administrators need to establish the framework and mechanisms by which communication of evaluation results will be conducted. Suggestions such as the following can provide guidelines to those who will ultimately be responsible for carrying out communication activities and provide a basis for judging the adequacy and effectiveness of the resulting communication effort.

Determining the Purpose(s) for Communicating Evaluation Results

Determining the purpose(s) of communication provides some direction to planning activities and provides a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the effort. Bettinghaus and Miller (1973) suggest that there are four general categories in which most communication objectives can be grouped. These are: (a) increasing awareness of the program; (b) changing attitudes toward the program; (c) achieving compliance with required tasks; and (d) obtaining supportive behaviors for the program.

From these basic categories specific objectives for communicating the evaluation results can be developed. Because the purpose for communicating evaluation results may differ for the various audiences to whom they will be reported administrators may wish to specify those major purposes which will be directed to each of the major target audiences.

EXAMPLE 14

Montgomery County, Maryland identified the following as specific purposes for their annual school progress reports:

1. Achieve greater parent knowledge and understanding of the needs and strengths of the school

2. Achieve parent identification with and commitment to the objectives of the school

3. Indicate how school programs are designed to meet the needs of students, maximum use is made of available resources, and the need for additional resources is substantiated by reliable data

4. Encourage a high level of staff and parent involvement in school planning and support for the way the school uses available resources

5. Be an integral part of the process through which all available data are reviewed to establish school objectives, indicators of their attainment, and follow-up procedures

6. Involve school staff in gathering and interpreting available data on the community, students, and school resources to set school objectives

7. Involve representative parents and students in a review of available data and the school objectives established by school staff

8. Communicate school objectives, priority for action based on these objectives, and elicit support and reaction from parents, area, and county staff.

(Elseroad, 1974)

Establishing Policies and Procedures to Guide Communication Programs

When the objectives for communicating evaluation results have been determined, administrators should consider the development of policies and procedures which would ensure the achievement of these objectives. Policies for communicating evaluation results are particularly important because they provide a structure and uniformity to communication efforts that ease the implementation of the program for the staff and protect the district from some of the destructive criticisms which may arise.

Policies for the release of evaluation results may include: (1) the identification of types of results which cannot be released, e.g. those results which violate the rights of individuals; (2) those results which must regularly be released to specific audiences; and (3) the channels through which evaluation results are to be released. Procedures and/or guidelines for communication may be developed to assist staff in developing an awareness of the needs of various audiences, identifying results to be reported, developing communication messages, utilizing various media, gathering feedback and evaluating the communication program.

Establishing or Utilizing an Advisory Committee for Evaluation

Administrators may find it beneficial to include in the organization for communication, an existing or specially created advisory council, composed of representatives of the major groups involved and interested in the school system. Such a council might consist of representatives of parents, students, teachers, principals, central office staff, the board of education, major community groups, interested taxpayers, etc. The major purposes of such a council might be to provide input into the selection of areas to be evaluated, to serve as a preliminary sounding board to the results which are to be released, and to serve as one vehicle for the transmission of results to the public at large.

Identifying and Assigning Responsibilities for Communication

A great deal can be done to ease the implementation of a communication program if the specific functions required to implement the program are defined and assigned to appropriate staff and advisory personnel. These functions may be developed in relation to the categories of (1) planning the communication program; (2) encoding or phrasing the messages in an understandable format for the intended audiences; (3) transmitting the developed messages to intended audiences; and (4) gathering feedback concerning the messages which were communicated (Simon, no date). Clearly when all needed activities are identified and assigned to personnel, there is much less risk of important activities being overlooked and of staff misunderstanding concerning their responsibilities for the program.

Developing a Schedule for the Release of Evaluation Results

As administrators and staff assume responsibilities for reporting they should also establish a schedule for releasing the results. The timing of the release of results has a great deal of impact on the utility of evaluation and is, therefore, a very important aspect of the total evaluation effort.

Scheduling the developing of communications regarding evaluation results should take into consideration (1) the time at which evaluation results will be available; (2) the time at which decisions must be made regarding the area to be evaluated; and (3) the times at which target audiences will be available to receive communications regarding evaluation results.

Additional consideration should be given to preparing interim communications regarding the results so that targeted audiences can have sufficient background to receive and use the results and so that they will be prepared

for the possibility of favorable or unfavorable results. Sufficient lead time should be provided to inform those who would be asked about the results time to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the findings. At the same time care should be taken to release evaluation results as soon as it is feasible to do so in order to prevent "leaks" of partial information which can be misinterpreted.

Developing an Awareness of the Potential Recipients of Evaluation Results

People most often respond to information they receive if they are interested in it and can understand it. The first step in conducting the work necessary to carry out an effective communication program must be, therefore, to identify and become familiar with persons who will be potential receivers of evaluation results and their particular information interests and needs. Then, and only then, can district personnel begin to design and develop techniques for communicating results to these audiences which will be effectively received and used.

Identifying the Audiences for Evaluation Information

In the second section of this paper suggestions were given for identifying evaluation audiences and their needs. In addition to this information it is helpful for those who are developing communication messages to know the audiences' level of knowledge and attitude toward the area in which the evaluation is conducted.

The release of evaluation results is often characterized by the inclusion of new programs, terms and symbols which are unfamiliar to many audiences. It is, therefore, helpful to know the level of both knowledge and/or misinformation that various audiences have concerning areas that

might be discussed in an evaluation communication. This information can assist communication developers in determining the extent of background information and pre-result communication that is necessary to create common understanding of the area being reported among the district and its audiences.

EXAMPLE 15

> In a research study conducted in California 13 parents from the middle to lower economic class were asked to read 106 goal statements for elementary education. The parents identified 1,265 words and phrases that they did not understand. The study pointed out the need to communicate in understandable language and to make special efforts to explain new concepts to the school's publics.
>
> (Barnes, 1972)

Finally, it is extremely beneficial to identify the attitudes which various audiences have regarding the total school program and the specific areas that may be discussed in evaluation communications. Those who have negative attitudes toward the schools, particularly if they are in a position to jeopardize a program, need to be identified so that efforts can be made to attempt to change their attitudes or neutralize their effects. Those who have positive attitudes can provide administrators with needed support for their efforts.

EXAMPLE 16

> Educators in Pennsylvania received a clear indication of the opinions of some audiences concerning their evaluation efforts when the following statement appeared in the newspaper:
>
> ...a group of parents and educators, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)...call attitude testing an invasion of privacy, damaging to children who are sensitive about revealing their innermost thoughts. ("Student Attitude Called Privacy Invasion," 1975)

Identifying the Forms of Communication Which Are Best Received by Each Audience

Everyone does not read the newspaper, watch television or attend PTA meetings. It is important in designing communications to select a technique for communication which will most effectively reach the greatest number of the specified audience. Attention needs to be given, therefore, to the identification of those approaches which are most effective for specific groups.

EXAMPLE 17

> In a survey conducted as part of a community-education project conducted in a rural North Carolina school district the following results were obtained:
>
> The most effective method of communicating (to the target audience) about project activities were (1) a school newspaper entitled "The Bond Community Enterprise;" (2) church announcements, and (3) visits to homes by ESEA Title III home-school counselors. The least effective methods were by radio and newspaper.
>
> (Bazemore, 1973)

In summary, the effectiveness and appropriateness of communication efforts can be greatly improved if district personnel can identify the the following concerning the audiences:

Audience/Priority/ Areas of Interest / Level of Knowledge /Attitude/Best Method of Communication

Developing the Communication

As can be gathered from the preceding discussions a great deal of work and thought must be given to a communication program before the first word of a report or message is written. With this background, however, the task of developing communication is far more clear and less subject to error.

The development of a specific communication system for evaluation results requires: (1) an identification of the evaluation information to be reported to each audience; (2) the development of messages that meet the needs of each targeted audience; (3) tailoring the communication to the media through which it will be channeled; and (4) establishing channels through which communications and feedback will flow.

Identifying Evaluation Information to be Reported

The information that is to be reported to each audience can be determined by comparing the kinds of information that will be made available as a result of the evaluation to the identified information needs of each audience. If this particular activity is conducted at the same time as the evaluation itself is designed, gaps in kinds of information needed can be identified. Procedures for gathering this needed information can then be incorporated into the evaluation design.

As the evaluation information and needs of targeted audiences are compiled, it should be possible to detect similarities in the types of evaluation information available and audience needs. When these similarities occur, it then becomes possible to utilize a single communication for several audiences.

At the completion of this activity district personnel should have a fairly well defined plan for the number of communications that are needed, the audiences to whom each of these communications should be addressed and the information that should be included in each communication.

EXAMPLE 18

PRIMES, an ESEA Title III project designed to assist schools in Columbus, Ohio, to fulfill mandated evaluation requirements, had as one of its activities the identification of audiences, information, dissemination means and schedule for reporting information concerning the project.

Charts depicting their decisions for the total project and activities at the building level are presented on the following two pages.

(Project PRIMES, no date)

Developing the Messages

It is at the point of developing the communication that particular attention should be given to the nature of evaluation results, the particular audience to whom the results will be reported and the media through which it will be transmitted. Some particular suggestions for reporting evaluation results are:[5]

1. Begin with technically valid and accurate information so that a truthful account of district accomplishments can be reported;
2. If the audience does not have a great deal of technical expertise, summarize detailed technical results in clear, nontechnical language. Save the technical information for special or required reports;
3. Utilize a more journalistic rather than technical writing style;
4. Avoid jargon; use understandable words, familiar language;
5. Keep communications brief;
6. Set a tone in the communication that is objective and affirmative;
7. Provide sufficient background information to explain the results, implications of the results for future actions taken by the system;
8. Sum up what the results mean; when possible provide comparative and interpretive information; and
9. Encourage realistic expectations.

If the results are bad, Hawes (1972) suggest the following:

1. If they are better than before, say so;
2. Identify clearly future actions that the district plans to take on the basis of the results.
3. Identify increased support that is needed to improve performance.
4. Avoid implicating individuals for the failure.

[5]Some of the suggestions were taken from Shepherd (1975).

EXAMPLE 19

PROJECT PRIMES DISSEMINATION CHART

Audiences	Dissemination Means	Frequency of Communication
State Department of Education	Newsletters	Quarterly
	Written Reports	Quarterly
	Memos	As Needed
Congressmen Wiley and Devine	Letters	Semi-Annually
	Newsletters	Quarterly
	Packets of Information	Annually
Superintendent of Schools	Abstracts of Reports - (2 pgs)	Semi-Annually
	Newsletters	Quarterly
	Oral Presentation at Committee-of-the Whole Meetings	Annually
	Slide-Tape Show	Annually
	Indirect Memo Correspondence through Asst. Superintendent	As Needed
Cabinet Members	Abstracts of Reports (2 pages)	Semi-Annually
	Newsletters	Quarterly
	Oral Presentations at Committee-of-the-Whole Meetings	Annually
	Slide-Tape Show	Annually
	Memos	As Needed
	Consultations (Person to Person)	As Needed
Curriculum Specialists	Consultations (Person to Person)	As Needed
	Newsletters	Quarterly
	Curriculum Reports and Recommendations	Annually
Elementary Principals	Slide-Tape Show	Annually
	Newsletters	Quarterly
	Consultations (Person-Person)	As Needed(Minimum Twice a Year)
	Brochure	
	Individualized School Report	Annually
	Information Packets	As Needed(Twice Yr.)
	System Newsletter	Annually
	Curriculum Report	Annually
Teachers	Slide-Tape Show(Updated Yearly)	Annually
	Newsletters	Quarterly
	Brochure	
	Consultations(Person to Person)	As Needed
	Individual School Report	Annually
	Curriculum Report	Annually
Parents	Surveys	Annually
	Committee Meetings	2-3 Times Yrly.
	Newspaper Articles	2-3 Times Yrly.
	Slide-Tape Show	Annually
	Television Presentations	Yearly
	Radio Programs	Twice Yearly
	Brochure	

EXAMPLE 19 (CONT'D)

DISSEMINATION AT THE BUILDING LEVEL

Content to be Communicated	Communicator(s)	Audience(s)	Dissemination Media	Implementation Timeline
Area of school program to be evaluated	-Building Evaluation Committee -School Staff	-Parents -PRIMES Staff -State Dept. of Education -Curriculum Area Specialists	-Newsletter -PTA Meeting -Memo -Standardized report form	Early in School Year (Sept. to Oct.)
Evaluation procedures utilized	Building Evaluation Committee	-Parents -State Dept. of Education -PRIMES Staff -School Staff	-Standardized report form -Memo -PTA Meeting	Early in School Year (Oct. to Nov.)
Staff and Community involvement	Building Evaluation Committee	-Parents -School Staff -PRIMES Staff -Service Clubs and Organizations -Local Citizens	-PTA Meeting -Staff Meeting -Standardized report forms -Local Newspaper -School Newsletter -PTA Newsletter -Service Club Meeting	Mid-Fall (Nov. to Dec.)
Reporting Evaluation Results	Building Evalution Committee	-Parents -Service Clubs -School Community -PRIMES Staff -State Dept. of Education -School Staff -Curriculum	-Special Rept. -Newsletter -Transparency report -Grade card insert -PTA Meeting -Local Newspaper -Educational Journals	Winter (Jan.-Feb.)
Follow-up Activity(s) to the Evaluation	-School Staff -Principal	-Parents -Service Clubs -School Community -PRIMES Staff -State Dept. of Education -Curriculum specialists	-Special Rprt. -Display -Slide-Tape presentation -Demonstration -PTA Meeting -Service Club Meeting -Newsletter -Local Newspaper	Spring (March to May)

In addition to the nature of evaluation results, consideration should be given to the particular audience to whom the results will be reported. Communications should be developed with an understanding of the relevance of the information to the audience and the audience's technical understanding, political perspectives and attention span. In order to encourage two-way communication concerning the results, messages should include a provision for feedback from the audience to the district.

In order to effectively utilize media, district personnel must become aware of the way messages should be constructed for the media that has been selected. Television spots are clearly different from newspaper articles both of which are considerably different from a 25 page written report. Message creators need to take into consideration the required journalistic style, format, length, and particular strengths of each medium before submitting a communication to its use.

Establishing Channels Through Which the Communication Will Flow

It is important to have established channels through which communications may flow prior to its release. This not only eases the process of releasing results but also gives newspapermen, program chairmen, etc sufficient notice to schedule the communication among their other activities and provide any background or lead-in communications prior to the release of the final results. This can be done by initially contacting personnel through which communications will be channeled, explaining the purpose of the evaluation and the communication of its results and receiving from them suggestions as to the most appropriate use of their medium.

It is then equally important to nurture and maintain a good working relationship with these persons in order to make the medium a viable tool for communication and feedback. This can be accomplished by releasing

results at the scheduled time in a format appropriate to the medium, being open, available and truthful and by being prepared to provide follow-up information if requested.

Obtaining and Utilizing Feedback

Effective communication is a two-way process. Administrators who release evaluation results must be prepared to receive and utilize the feedback they receive from targeted audiences. An initial step in this direction would be to provide and publicize well-known channels for feedback. These may include parent-teacher conferences, specially called hearings on the results, PTA meetings, letter writing or personal contact with the administrator or his or her staff. Then as feedback is received administrators need to utilize the results in program planning, designing new evaluations and improving the communication program itself. Publication of the use the district has made of the feedback is a valuable way to encourage additional input and continuous feedback for future evaluation efforts.

After the results of an evaluation have been released and feedback has been received, district personnel need to analyze their communication program and the knowledge they have received. This analysis can be as formal as a detailed evaluation design to gather specified types of information or as informal as a discussion of the program at a staff meeting. The targets of this analysis should be the concerns of the targeted audiences and the effectiveness of the communication strategy that was used.

Time should be taken to reassess the knowledge, concerns and interests of targeted audiences to ensure that information that will be used as a

basis for future communications efforts is up-to-date and accurate. This analysis should also provide an indication of sources of support for the schools and their evaluation efforts as well as sources and reasons for criticism.

A second analysis should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the communication and feedback strategies utilized. Questions such as the following might be investigated:

1. Did the messages reach the intended audiences?
2. Were the concerns of each audience addressed?
3. To what extent were the objectives of the communication met?
4. Was sufficient ground-work and background information provided?
5. Were the avenues for feedback effective?; Which were most heavily used?
6. Were the operational plans for the program feasible and workable?
7. Were the messages appropriate for the selected media?

On the basis of this analysis, necessary modifications in the communications program should be installed to improve the communication of results for future evaluations.

Summary

As can be seen from this discussion, the communication of evaluation results is a highly complex undertaking requiring a great deal of planning, work and specific skills in effectively relaying a message through a variety of media to different audiences with varying interests and needs. Because effective communication is the key to utilization of evaluation results, it is critical to the total evaluation process. Administrators need to be aware of its contribution and utilize their resources to develop

a planned program to communicate their results to selected audiences and gather important feedback to assist them in the improvement of the district's programs and receptiveness to its constituents.

V. UTILIZING THE RESULTS OF EVALUATION

> *An evaluation is a waste of resources unless it leads to some action, or at least a conscious, explicit decision not to take any action.*
>
> *Erlandson (1973, p. 25)*

Educational evaluations are judged by many criteria such as the accuracy of the results and the appropriateness of the methods used. One of the most important criteria from the position of a school administrator is, however, the utility of the evaluations.

Ensuring that results are used in a school district is one of the most important of the administrator's responsibilities for evaluation. It may also be one of their most difficult and frustrating tasks. As experience with testing programs has shown, the mere provision of evaluation results does not guarantee that they will be used. There are other factors, related to the evaluations themselves and the environment in which they are released, that have a considerable effect on the extent to which evaluations are used. Such factors include:

1. *The degree to which evaluation results address the specific needs of its audiences;*

Evaluation results will be more readily used if the persons who receive them can see a direct application of the results to their particular needs. When evaluation results do not directly address their needs, targeted audiences often have difficulty determining the implications of the results for their work. It is for this reason that such emphasis is given in the focusing and communicating stages to determining the audiences for evaluation and their information needs.

2. *The extent to which the intended users were involved in the evaluation process and, therefore, feel committed to the effort and its results;*

Stufflebeam (1974, p. 25) states, "A principle of educational change is that unless persons who will need to support the change are involved early, meaningfully and continuously in the the development of an innovation, they likely will not support the operation and use of the innovation." The same principle applies to the utilization of evaluation results. Involvement, commitment, cooperation, credibility and use are closely related suggesting that administrators wishing to maximize the utilization of evaluation results earnestly seek the involvement of targeted audiences in planning and/or conducting evaluations.

3. *The extent to which the audience perceives the results to be true;*

It is an almost impossible task to have people use evaluation results that they perceive to be in error. It is for this reason that administrators should continually strive for excellence in their evaluation efforts. To convince audiences that evaluation results are true, administrators should communicate to their audiences the methodologies used to collect evaluation data focusing on those efforts that were made to ensure objectivity.

4. *The extent to which audiences perceive the use of evaluation results to be important; and*

The degree of importance that the district administration attaches to the use of evaluation results has a marked effect on the utilization of results by the staff and public. Administrators wishing to encourage the use of evaluation results in their districts need to convey the importance of using evaluation results by providing support to utilization efforts. Staff in-service and public meetings to explain the results

and provide suggestions for use and released time for staff to study the results and plan on the basis of the findings are but two ways that the importance of using evaluation results might be conveyed.

5. *The extent to which the staff and public are willing to accept change.*

It is often the case that evaluation results indicate a need for change in the way things are currently and, sometimes, traditionally being done. Educators and publics that are resistant to change will probably find very little use for these types of results. Administrators who actively engage in evaluation activities in their districts must be prepared to make changes and encourage their staff members to alter their methods when evaluation results indicate that such a need exists.

This is not an exhaustive list of factors related to utilization. It should, however, provide administrators with some thoughts concerning the factors that might affect the utilization of evaluation results in their particular districts and suggest some steps that might be taken to maximize the use of their evaluation efforts.

Given that administrators, their staff and publics are receptive to using evaluation results, for what kinds of actions can they be used? The answer to this question is dependent on the purpose for which the evaluation was conducted, the type of information that was provided, and the imagination and creativity of the recipients of the results. Some assistance in determining how evaluation results should be used may be provided, however, by lists of examples like the following:

Administration

1. Support and defend administrative decisions
2. Establish district-wide priorities for programs and operations
3. Allocate funds

4. Reduce wasteful use of resources, i.e. money, personnel, materials, equipment, facilities
5. Determine pupil and/or public satisfaction/ dissatisfaction with schools
6. Continue or terminate special and/or innovative projects and programs

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Identify methods and materials which best meet student needs
2. Choose curricula
3. Identify needs
4. Establish district-wide, school building and classroom goals and objectives
5. Monitor student progress
6. Monitor program development and progress

Personnel

1. Identify in-service training needs
2. Assign staff
3. Grant promotions, tenure, special supplements, etc.
4. Terminate employment

Public

1. Help board of education account to students, parents and citizens
2. Bring public needs and opinions to the board of education and administration
3. Improve communication to publics
4. Increase the knowledge of publics concerning schools
5. Encourage greater public involvement in school affairs

Governing/Funding Agencies

1. Justify expenditures of funds
2. Document effects of special programs

Practicing administrators, reading a list such as this, can undoubtedly think of many more ways that evaluation results can be used in their districts. For most, however, the transition from thinking to actual use of results will not be easy. The history of the use of evaluative type information in public schools is not a good one. Perhaps the most outstanding example is in the use of standardized test results. Most, if not all, children in American schools are given standardized tests.

Unfortunately, the results of these tests have seldom been used to plan instructional programs for the students. Administrators who wish for evaluation results to be used in their district may find that they must work particularly hard on this aspect of their evaluation program before results are used to a great extent.

VI. THE EVALUATOR'S ROLE

The primary focus of this document has been those areas of responsibility for evaluation which are directly within the realm of school district administration. These have included: (1) establishing a supportive climate; (2) focusing evaluation on the needs of the district; (3) providing an organization and support for evaluation; (4) maintaining a system for communicating the results; and (5) utilizing evaluation results. Clearly, these are not all of the roles and responsibilities that must be assumed to conduct evaluations in local school districts. Those responsibilities which are associated with the actual planning and implementation are noticeably missing.

The reason for this omission is that designing and implementing evaluation studies are not major responsibilities of administrators but of evaluators and/or the persons in school districts who actually do the evaluations. These are the activities that require the specialized skills of inquiry, i.e. identifying evaluation questions, designing plans to obtain necessary information, instrument selection and development, and data analysis and interpretation, and are, therefore, best accomplished by persons specifically trained in these areas.

A more complete picture of the entire evaluation process can be obtained by reviewing those major responsibilities of evaluators. These responsibilities include: (1) planning evaluations; (2) selecting or constructing instruments; (3) collecting data; (4) processing data; (5) analyzing and interpreting information; and (6) reporting evaluation findings.[6]

[6] These and many of the tasks given were taken from Owens (1968, pp. 74-75).

Planning Evaluations

It is at the planning stage that evaluators can and should draw most heavily on the input from district administrators. At this stage evaluators determine what is to be evaluated and how the evaluation is to be done. Determining the areas to be evaluated and the types of information that should be collected should be based on the identified information needs of the district and its audiences and the evidence available in literature and theory that suggests the inclusion of certain areas in the design. From the purposes for which the evaluation is being conducted, the audiences to whom results are to be reported, the characteristics of the area chosen, types of information selected for evaluation, and the resources available, the specific methodologies used in the evaluation are selected. Criteria for judging the results are established. Audiences and their information needs for reporting purposes are specified. And finally, an operational plan including staff requirements and responsibilities, resource allocations and a schedule of evaluation activities is developed.

Selecting or Constructing Instruments

Most evaluation efforts require the collection of similar information across objects of the evaluation, e.g. students, teachers, schools, etc. This necessitates the use of some form of instrumentation whether it be checklists, tests, attitude scales, observation scales, questionnaires, opinionnaires, or forms for record keeping. Prior to the implementation of evaluation activities, evaluators must determine instrumentation needs, determine criteria for the type of instruments to be used, select

appropriate instruments or, when no instrumentation is available, develop the necessary instruments. When instruments must be developed additional tasks of pilot testing, determining reliability and validity, and revising instruments are required.

Collecting Data

The actual work of gathering evaluative information consists of tasks such as: (1) identifying the information sources for collecting the data; (2) specifying the methods to be used in collecting data; (3) specifying sampling procedures; (4) training personnel to collect data; and (5) administering evaluation instruments and recording the data. It is in this phase of the evaluation process that the most extensive involvement and cooperation of the school district staff is needed.

Processing Data

Processing data consists of preparing results so that they can be analyzed. More specifically it consists of providing a format for coding data, scoring instruments and providing for data storage, management and retrieval. For districts having access to data processing equipment such as computers, this responsibility may also include using existing or writing new computer programs.

Analyzing and Interpreting Information

After the results are collected and coded they need to be analyzed so that the meaning of the results can be determined. This consists of selecting an appropriate analytical procedure, designing a means for performing the analysis and performing the analysis. The results are then

interpreted in terms of previously stated criteria, the purposes of the evaluation and the identified district needs.

Reporting Information

This area of responsibility consists of translating the results of evaluation into communications appropriate for the audiences who are to receive the results. It includes specific tasks such as: (1) specifying means for providing information to the audiences; (2) specifying the format for evaluation reports; (3) developing the communications; and (4) assisting administrators in obtaining feedback. This area of responsibility must necessarily be closely tied to the total district's communication program.

The relationship of the primary roles for evaluation of administrators and evaluators can perhaps be more clearly understood by placing them together in an approximate order of their occurrence.

Figure 2. Primary Roles For Evaluation

Administrators	Evaluators
1. Establishing a supportive climate	
2. Focusing evaluations on district needs	
3. Providing organization and support	
	4. Planning evaluations
	5. Selecting or constructing instruments
	6. Collecting data
	7. Processing data
	8. Analyzing and interpreting data
	9. Reporting information
10. Communicating results to audiences	
11. Utilizing results	

The reader should note here the use of the word "primary." Responsibilities for evaluation, both ideally and practically, are not as clear cut. Both administrators and evaluators have secondary important

responsibilities which overlap. Evaluators, through inservice programs that they conduct for the staff, assist in the establishment of supportive climate, communicating evaluation results and providing assistance and direction for utilizing results. Administrators, through their efforts to focus evaluations and the organization and support they provide, assist evaluators in planning and implementing evaluations.

It has also not been the intent of this discussion to imply that administrators and evaluators are the only persons who have responsibilities for evaluation in a school district. While it may be granted that administrators and evaluators have the major responsibilities for installing, designing and implementing evaluation activities, it is most often the level of participation by other staff members and constituents that determines the quality, appropriateness and usefulness of the evaluations conducted in a district. Evaluation is, therefore, a team activity enhanced by the efforts and ideas brought to it by the many persons who are knowledgeable and interested in a school district.

VII. IMPLICATIONS OF EVALUATION FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Administrators, particularly those who are developing evaluation systems in their district for the first time, need to be aware of some of the implications that evaluation may have for themselves, their staff and the programs for which they are responsible. Knowledge of some of these possible outcomes may enable them to be better prepared and able to deal with some of the changes that are bound to occur.

Administrators may find that the utilization of evaluation results requires a change in their approach to school district management.

The kinds of information that administrators use as a basis for their actions vary considerably. Some are objective and some are not. Airasian (1974, p. 148), for example, describes the following as bases for administrative action which are more or less objective:

> Some decisions are made on the basis of authority, exemplified by the practice of basing action upon the solicited opinions of experts or specialists. Other decisions are made on the basis of tradition, exemplified by the practice of "letting well enough alone" or adopting the policies of some modern school of logical deduction, exemplified by the practice of arriving at a course of action by a chain of deductive reasoning starting from certain premises or assumptions. Finally, there are decisions based on empirical evidence, exemplified by the practice of arriving at solutions on the basis of collected data.

Equally, if not more common sources for actions are less objective and arise out of a political context. The attitude and/or opinions of the district's constituency, i.e. local board of education, influential or powerful citizens and pressure groups, etc., must always be considered

by administrators and often become the source from which their decisions are made.

Administrators, as a result of their philosophy, training and/or experience, tend to choose as a basis for their actions the source or sources which have proven to be most effective for them. As a result, for some the administration of a school district will be politically based. For others, administration will be an active process of utilizing the most expedient from a variety of sources. And for a few, administration will primarily be based on some objective information or facts.

Extensive utilization of evaluation results is consistent with an administrative philosophy which prefers administrative to political tasks and views administration as the efficient use of resources (House, 1973, p. 4). Administrators who do not currently have this philosophy toward their work and establish an effective evaluation program may experience changes in their approach to the management and day-to-day operation of their district.

> *Evaluation in school districts may lead to an increased awareness by staff and publics of what is happening in schools.*

Parents of school children have a pretty thorough knowledge of what is going on in the classes their children attend. School building staffs have a fair picture of what is happening in their school. Too few people, educators and publics alike, however, have a broader knowledge of what is happening in the schools. Evaluations provide an opportunity for a review of school district programs and their effects and the

dissemination of this information to their constituents. This should result in a more knowledgeable public and a greater understanding by them of the problems faced by administrators.

The release of evaluation results may lead to more overt conflicts regarding the operation of school districts.

The provision of objective, evaluative information may provide fuel for opposing views creating stronger disagreements among factions supporting different directions for school district operations. A primary example of this type of situation has occurred with the release of information indicating that SAT scores of high school students have dropped. Some groups quickly used the information to enhance their arguments against forced busing. Others used the information to indicate an abdication of educational responsibilities by the parents. Even when results are not used to support a given position, they can and often are used as a source of criticism of the schools, their personnel and programs.

The conduct of evaluation in school districts may lead to changes in operation and programs.

Erlandson (1973, p. 21) notes that "If the evaluation is to assess all the pertinent features of a school program, the administrator must keep in mind that he, and some of the program's features that he values most, may be fair game for the evaluation." Evaluations that identify weaknesses in the school program can be expected to create pressures for change. Administrators and staff members who are not prepared or willing

to make some changes as a result of the evaluations they conduct should not be surprised if increased dissatisfaction with the school results.

The collection, use and release of evaluation information may create staff unrest.

Whether it is fear of what evaluation results may reveal or fear of inappropriate uses of evaluation for personnel assessment, many staff members and particularly teachers are resistant to evaluations of themselves or their programs. This resistance is still evident when efforts are made to assure staff that the results will not be used for personnel assessment. Obviously, school districts need fair, objective methods of evaluating programs and their staff. But it would be unrealistic to assume that the implementation of such a program will not meet with some staff resistance.

The utilization of evaluation results may lead to more efficient district operation and more effective educational experiences for students.

Those who advocate the use of evaluation in school districts most often base their arguments on the benefits that an administrator and his programs can accrue. The types of benefits that they suggest are certainly impressive and give credence to the suppositions that the risks of conducting evaluation are worth taking. Stufflebeam (1973, pp. 6-8), for example, lists the following as hypotheses about the effects of evaluation in a school district.

A. Improvement of Student Learning

1. improved general educational development of students,
2. better identification and treatment of students' special learning needs,
3. improved student attitudes toward themselves and others, and
4. advanced occupational awareness and maturity.

B. Curriculum Development

1. greater numbers of curriculum changes,
2. better staff understanding of student needs, and
3. a better match between the curriculum and identified student needs.

C. Improvement of School Administration

1. clearer, more up-to-date, and more defensible program priorities,
2. expenditures that are more in line with established priorities,
3. better planning,
4. more efficient operations, and
5. evidence that special projects are more often continued or discontinued based on cost/effectiveness data as opposed to the availability of external funds.

D. Financial Gains

1. better success in obtaining state and federal discretionary funds,
2. increased money from local operating levies and bond issues, and
3. increased savings through elimination of bad programs.

E. Improved Communication

1. staff throughout the school system who are more conversant with the results of experimental programs,
2. community personnel who are better able to discuss the quality of school programs based on empirical evidence,
3. state officials who are more knowledgeable of the school system's novel practices and who are better able to discuss the quality of the school practices based on empirical evidence,
4. more successful projects being integrated into the district's regular program,
5. increased instances of other school districts adopting this school system's ideas and programs, and
6. increased instances of this particular district adopting successful ideas and programs of other districts.

F. Increased Public Support for Education

1. more public expressions of confidence in and respect for the school system,
2. a better percentage of bond issues and operating levies passing,
3. a public that is more conversant with student achievement findings,
4. a public that is more conversant with the results of project evaluations, and
5. a public that increasingly judges the school school system to be accountable for its actions.

It would be ill-advised and inaccurate for this author to suggest that only good things will come from the use of evaluation in a school district. There are risks involved as in any new venture. But as Morphet, Johns and Reller (1967, p. 531) state, "Every social system must have the benefit of appraisal, if it is to survive, or grow beyond survival."

Perhaps the most meaningful way to support the use of evaluation in a school district is to solicit the opinion of an administrator who has had experience with evaluation in his district. Dr. Jack Taylor (1975, p. 19), Superintendent of Saginaw, Micnigan public schools states, "I don't really know how many potential problems our evaluative feedback has helped detect and how many crises have been avoided as a result, but I do know I wouldn't want to go back to the old ways and find out."

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